

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-7 (canceled)

Claim 8 (original): A coating method for applying a coating solution on a substrate, wherein utilized is a coating unit comprising: a container enclosing the substrate; a casing for accommodating the container therein; a supply device for supplying a predetermined gas into the casing; a first exhaust pipe for exhausting an atmosphere inside the container; a second exhaust pipe for exhausting an atmosphere inside the casing; a first adjusting device which is disposed in the first exhaust pipe, for adjusting a flow rate of an atmosphere passing through the first exhaust pipe; and a second adjusting device which is disposed in the second exhaust pipe, for adjusting a flow rate of an atmosphere passing through the second exhaust pipe, and the coating method comprising the step of:

adjusting a flow rate of the atmosphere inside the casing which is exhausted from the second exhaust pipe to maintain a pressure inside the casing at a higher level than a pressure outside the casing.

Claim 9 (original): A coating method for applying a coating solution on a substrate, wherein utilized is a coating unit comprising: a container enclosing the substrate; a casing for accommodating the container therein; a supply device for supplying a predetermined gas into the casing; a first exhaust pipe for exhausting an atmosphere inside the container; a second exhaust pipe for exhausting an atmosphere inside the casing; a first adjusting device which is disposed in the first exhaust pipe, for adjusting a flow rate of an atmosphere passing through the first exhaust pipe; and a second adjusting device which is disposed in the second exhaust pipe, for adjusting a flow rate of an atmosphere passing through the second exhaust pipe, and in which a downstream side of the first exhaust pipe is

connected to an upstream side of the second adjusting device in the second exhaust pipe, and the coating method comprising the step of:

adjusting a flow rate of the atmosphere inside the container which is exhausted from the first exhaust pipe to a first flow rate and adjusting a flow rate of the atmosphere inside the casing which is exhausted from the second exhaust pipe to a second flow rate which is higher than the first flow rate to maintain a pressure inside the casing at a higher level than a pressure inside the casing.

Claim 10 (original): A coating method according to claim 8, wherein, a flow rate of the atmosphere inside the container which is exhausted from the first exhaust pipe is increased only when the coating solution is supplied onto a center of the substrate and the coating solution is diffused while the substrate is rotated.

Claim 11 (original): A coating method according to claim 9, wherein, a flow rate of the atmosphere inside the container which is exhausted from the first exhaust pipe is increased only when the coating solution is supplied onto a center of the substrate and the coating solution is diffused while the substrate is rotated.

Claim 12 (original): A coating method according to claim 8, wherein the coating unit further comprises a coating solution supply nozzle, a carrier for carrying the coating solution supply nozzle, an accommodating portion which is disposed inside the casing, for accommodating the carrier therein, and a third exhaust pipe for exhausting an atmosphere inside the accommodating portion, and

wherein the atmosphere inside the accommodating portion is exhausted from the third exhaust pipe at least when the coating solution supply nozzle is positioned above the substrate.

Claim 13 (original): A coating method according to claim 9,

wherein the coating unit further comprises a coating solution supply nozzle, a carrier for carrying the coating solution supply nozzle, an accommodating portion which is disposed inside the casing, for accommodating the carrier therein, and a third exhaust pipe for exhausting an atmosphere inside the accommodating portion, and

wherein the atmosphere inside the accommodating portion is exhausted from the third exhaust pipe at least when the coating solution supply nozzle is positioned above the substrate.